

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Jake E. Hoepfner (Lisgar—Marquette, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege and an honour, maybe with a bit of hesitation, to speak to this bill today.

• (1700)

As I was listening to the hon. member from Yukon, I threw a few pages from my speech away. I thought I probably did not have the insight into native land settlements or land agreements, but I do have some insight into what division means and I do have some insight into what co-operation means.

As a farmer I must say I have never seen any farm operations succeed when they started dividing and becoming independent. When a father owned all the property and all the machinery and had control of the situation, the family usually worked together very well. There was very little infighting. However when some of the members felt that their wisdom was probably greater than that of the founder who had built the corporation or the company and they wanted to divide and become separate little nations, it seemed to run into problems.

Sooner or later the governor was neglected. They were setting up boards which consisted of neighbours trying to settle disputes in the farming operation. Generally there was conflict. There was hurt. Usually it wound up that family members did not even want to see each other or recognize each other as being in the same family.

It really worries me when we start addressing our problems by creating separate little nations. We have talked so much about the Quebec issue. I have explained very often in this House that unity cannot be created by division. That seems to be so contradictory. That is one thing we are missing with these bills.

I was very much opposed to Bill C-33 and Bill C-34 for one very simple reason. I did have those bills analyzed by some of my native friends. I asked them to give me direction on how I should vote on those two bills. The feedback I got was: "If you vote for Bill C-33 and Bill C-34, I will lose my hunting rights. I will lose my fishing rights that I had in this great country of ours. From now on I will have to go and ask each individual nation to have those privileges". That really hit home to me. How is that type of feeling going to solve the problems of what happened probably a century or so ago?

The other problem I had with these bills was the way they were debated and the way they were rammed through this House. When true democracy is neglected it generally is the beginning of human rights violations and the beginning of unrest and civil disobedience which in a lot of cases ends in revolt or revolution. That is happening now in eastern bloc countries.

After being in the Soviet Union in 1990-91 and looking at the conditions some of the native people enjoy today, I wonder what we are grumbling about in this country. No matter where we live in this great country of ours today, we have nothing to complain about. We have not got people starving. We have not got people freezing to death for lack of clothing. We have not got people killing each other just so they can get to the food supply.

We have a federal government today that has a great desire to treat everybody equally. The government in previous years has not only passed laws that are supposed to work against discrimination, it has passed laws that are going to be guaranteed under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. When I see that now we are creating separate nations and these laws that work so well are not going to be applicable, what are we getting into?

• (1705)

When I look at this bill that is setting up a board with 50 per cent of the people appointed by the Yukon natives council and 50 per cent by the federal government, I wonder why. I own property and there are all kinds of acts that protect my rights should the mining companies or oil drilling companies want access to that land. If I am not happy with the decision these acts force upon me I have the full right to go to the Supreme Court of Canada but I am also liable for the costs that are incurred through that. That is one deterrent I think is very effective in avoiding a lot of disputes we would probably otherwise have.

It seems to me that this board will have the power to make some decisions. If the First Nations do not feel the decision is right, they can appeal to the Yukon courts. If the First Nations feel that ruling has gone against them, what happens then? Do they go to the Supreme Court of Canada? Are the laws enforced by the native law enforcement agency or the Canadian law enforcement agency? This is something that really bothers me because I am sure there will be disputes where the resolution will not be acceptable to either side and law enforcement will have to be used.

I listened to the hon. member for Churchill the other day when he said: "My people have made a commitment that we want to live in peace and enjoyment of the land and the resources with generations in the future". How does that pertain to these land settlement claims or independent nations? "We want to live with each other, we want to co-operate but we want to separate". To me that is a recipe for disaster.

When I try to analyze these bills in light of my own experiences with other situations, I must say we are binding our future generations to dispute after dispute after dispute. It does not seem possible that these boards under the conditions in which they are set up will ever be able to be disbanded. We will continually have problems in developing these huge tracts of land.